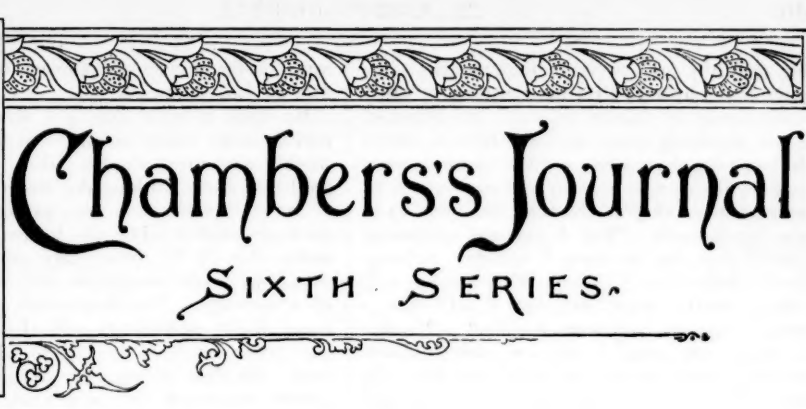




Chambers's Journal

SIXTH SERIES.



DOG-FANCYING.

By LOUIS MELLARD.

I ONCE heard an old lady declare that if she had a dog she would have one of those great Sarah Bernhardt dogs that dig the dear old monks out of the snow in Switzerland. Those of you who know only a little about dogs will smile loftily at the old lady's ignorance; but, believe me, there are scores of dog-owners who know no more than the lady with the leanings towards the Sarah Bernhardt breed.

One is apt to excuse such ignorance in ladies; but when I meet a man who doesn't even know the breed of the dog he is paying a tax for I feel inclined to—muzzle him; any conscientious dog-fancier would. I remember being invited by an old school-chum to spend a week-end at his seaside bungalow a few years ago. Knowing my hobby, he wrote: 'Amongst other things, I have just bought a mastiff, and want your opinion of him.' I was at once interested, because I had two fine specimens (prize-winners, too) of the same breed. The morning after my arrival he proudly showed me the animal. *It was a cross-bred St Bernard collie!* I broke the information to him gently. Really, I cannot say whether he was annoyed most at me or the dog. But he shot the dog.

While on the subject of people's ignorance of canine breeds I would like to tell one more story, vouched for by a professional dog-breeding friend of mine. One afternoon a lady called at his kennels, and one of his men approached her. The following dialogue ensued between the lady and the yardman: 'I live in the suburbs of X., and want a good house-dog—one that you can guarantee.' 'Yes, ma'am.' 'I don't want one that will keep us awake all night, barking at nothing.' 'No, ma'am.' 'He must be big and strong and—er—rather fierce, you know.' 'Yes, ma'am.' 'But gentle as a lamb, you know, with us.' 'Yes, ma'am.' 'And he must drive off every tramp that comes along.' 'Yes, ma'am.' 'But I

shouldn't like him to interfere with any poor but honest man looking for work.' 'No, ma'am.' 'If a burglar comes prowling around at night, he must pounce on him at once.' 'Yes, ma'am.' 'But he mustn't attack a neighbour who makes an evening call.' 'No, ma'am.' 'And—er—he mustn't go for people who come hurrying to our house at all hours of the night to call my husband. He's a doctor—and that would be awkward.' 'I see, ma'am, what you want—a first-class thought-reader dog.' 'Yes; I suppose that's the kind. Can you send me one?' 'I'm very sorry, ma'am; but we're out of 'em at present. We've only got quite ordinary dogs in just now.' 'Oh dear! I suppose we shall have to wait. By the way, are they very expensive?' 'Well, ma'am, they are, rather; you see, they're a bit scarce.' 'Are they, really? Well, when you get one of that breed (!) be sure to let me know.' 'I will, ma'am.'

Sagacious and intelligent as the average dog is, I fear this good lady was too exacting in her demands. This intelligence, some fanciers aver, is mainly a matter of breed, or rather largely influenced by breed and its thoroughness. I beg to differ. My experience—which covers most sorts of dogs, good, bad, and indifferent—has convinced me that practically all dogs are equally intelligent, in the ordinary sense of the term; that thorough-bred dogs are no more sagacious than the dog of very doubtful antecedents. In fact, I have seen marked intelligence in many a worthless mongrel. But when we come to speak of sagacity from the *sporting* point of view, the case is different. Then the well-bred dog shows his superiority. It is against nature to expect a ramshackle, mixed-bred retriever to follow the gun with the same keen perception as his brother with a clean, clear, unbroken line of forebears.

Of course, as a dog-fancier, one would have no canine following at one's heels that could not show at least some signs of pedigree; yet most dog-lovers, I fancy, can on occasion show a sneak-

ing sympathy for the poor outcast mongrel. The stain of the hybrid's birth can sometimes be partly washed away by definite training. One afternoon I was returning home by train from a certain Midland dog-show, when a little, sharp-featured man in the opposite corner of the compartment accosted me: 'They've got some nice pups up at the dog-show, sir.' 'Yes,' I answered tentatively. 'But I've a dog at home I wouldn't exchange for the best of 'em!' 'No? What breed is he?' 'Don't exactly know, sir; but I calls him a coaly.' 'Perhaps you mean a collie?' 'No, sir; I means just what I said—a coaly. Money wouldn't tempt me to part with that dog. No, sir. He's a bit of all sorts, a fair mongrel perhaps; but we couldn't keep house without him. You see, when I first had him, several years ago, I trained him to bark at all the railway trains as they passed our house. That's his sole work—barking at trains; and he does howl round 'em, 'specially coal-trains. Well, he annoys those railway men so much that every driver on the line has sworn to kill him. But he's a valuable dog, sir.' 'I still fail to see where his value comes in,' was my innocent comment. 'Well, sir, you'd admit his value if you lived in my place and had all the coal you could burn, and some over to sell, thrown at your back-door free of cost.'

Evidently that dog was not to be despised.

Another rogue of a dog was the mastiff trained by some Parisian thieves to go bounding up against old gentlemen in the street. Naturally the average old gentleman cannot stand against four feet or so of powerful mastiff. A 'lady' and 'gentleman' (owners of the dog) would promptly step forward, and, with profuse apologies, assist the fallen man to his feet. They would also ease him of his watch or similar trifles at the same time.

So you see training is worth much when, without training, the dog might be worth nothing. I knew a man who trained his dog never to bark. Three years were necessary for perfect success in the making of a non-barking dog; and my friend flattered himself that he had a novelty. But I am inclined to think that he would not have wasted those three years had he known that there are at least three varieties of dog that never bark—the Australian dog, the Egyptian shepherd-dog, and the 'lion-headed' dog of Tibet. In some Japanese cities a non-barking dog would be deemed valuable, for there they have a quaint law which makes the owner of a night-barker liable to arrest and the penalty of a year's work for the benefit of neighbours who may have been disturbed. The fact that the barking of a dog on the earth can be heard by a balloonist at a height of about four miles does not appeal to the average man so much as the fact that that same barking can often be heard four streets away.

Some people still believe in the superstition that the howling of a dog is always followed by death. That notion ought to be exploded—so

many of the people who attempt to shoot such dogs are bad marksmen.

My uncle, a fervid dog-hater, lived between a retired army major on the one hand and a wealthy shipbroker on the other. This latter gentleman had a barking dog that was the bane of my uncle's life. At last, growing desperate, my uncle wrote a polite note to the man of ships saying that if he would only get rid of the animal he would recompense him to the extent of a sovereign. The shipbroker's servant came round almost immediately with the message that her master would do his best to sell the dog at once. Needless to say, my worthy dog-hating relative considered this very kind, and said as much. Late in the afternoon of the same day my uncle happened to be in the City and called in at the shipbroker's office. 'Have you succeeded in getting rid of the dog?' he asked. 'Oh yes, I've got rid of him,' was the reply. 'Ah! now I can sleep at night.' He was about to pay out the gold coin according to promise, when he be-thought himself to ask what had become of the tormentor. 'Oh,' said the broker airily, 'I sold him to that old army chap next door to you for half-a-sovereign this afternoon. Wasn't bad—was it?' Uncle's reply, I understand, was quite unpublishable.

Once, while on a visit at this testy old gentleman's house, I went out for a long country-side stroll, taking with me my rough-haired terrier—a breed I am particularly fond of, for its intelligence is beyond doubt. Reaching a village some twelve miles from home, and feeling fatigued, I decided to return by train. It was not until I reached the station just in time to snatch a ticket for the only train back that evening that I discovered the terrier was not at my heels or whereabouts. Over supper I related the incident to my uncle. I noticed he smiled. So did I. For about four o'clock the following morning my little rough-haired gentleman arrived and clamoured vocally to get in! He yelled all round the house till I let him inside. He had never been to that village before, and he had spent only three days in my uncle's house. This, I think, will answer the frequently asked question, 'Can dogs find their way home from a distance?' Yes, if they are fairly old and not 'held up' by some member of that numerous class who augment their income by 'finding' lost dogs and claiming the advertised reward.

A witty dog-fancier, on being asked this self-same question by a lady about to purchase her first poodle, said, 'Well, madam, it all depends on the dog. If it's one you wish to lose, he will find his way back from a place two hundred miles off; but if he's a dog you value, he's apt to get lost going round the corner of your own house.' Here is a true story in corroboration. I overheard it myself, passing through the slums of a Midland city. A heavy-eyebrowed, bullet-headed

man was seated on his doorstep smoking a clay, when he shouted across to a kindred spirit similarly employed, 'Say, Bill, yer remembers that dog as I picked up larst week?' 'Yes.' 'Well, I tried two 'ull days ter sell 'im, an' nobody 'ud gie me more'n two bob; so I went like a 'onest man to the old lady wot 'ad lost 'im, an' she give me ten bob.' And that sort of thing goes on almost daily in our larger cities. The best dogs, after being 'lifted,' are generally sold away in some other town.

Dog-fancying, or the love of dogs, is not an acquired taste. The man who likes not a dog has a meanness, a flaw, somewhere in his soul. Such a man may, perhaps, grow to like one particular dog, say, through association or environment; but he has never an eye for the other dogs in the world. Therefore, he is no true dog-lover. The man with the real, the instinctive fancy for a dog has always an eye for all dogs. Many men love a dog, not for his intrinsic value,

but because he is a *dog*—an animal with but few faults and a more than human virtue—faithfulness.

In the north of England, where rabbit-coursing is a very popular sport, swift, well-trained dogs often win large sums of money and local fame for their owners. An old Yorkshire collier, well known for his success in the coursing-field, surprised his mates a year or two ago by marrying a decidedly ugly woman. In addition to this, he was generally considered a confirmed woman-hater. 'Why has ta gone an' got spliced, lad, at thy age?' one of his cronies asked. 'It's not much of a tale,' the old man replied carelessly. 'I agree wi' ye 'at Bessie yon' is no beauty; but that dog o' mine, 'e wos simply pinin' for some 'un to look after 'im while I be away at t' pit. I cud na bear to leave 'im in t' 'ouse by hissen, so I married Bessie. She ain't 'andsome, but she's mighty good company for the dog!'

Great is the dog!

OUR LADY OF DELIVERANCE.

CHAPTER XIV.—HOW WE TRAPPED THE TRAITOR.



WE had still three hours before Colonel Lepard could arrive. There was, of course, the possibility that he had been unable to leave at once, and might not come till the following day; but we believed he would come that night, and made all our preparations accordingly.

We made Roussel comfortable in a bedroom upstairs; then we made a hearty meal in the *salon* below, and sat smoking while waiting for the arrival of our—guest.

In this state of expectancy the minutes which lay between us and the supreme moment when our plans would be put to the test, for the making and marring of more than one life, passed but slowly. As the time drew near, my heart began to thump a trifle quicker, and every nerve in my body seemed on the alert for the first sound that should tell us that the time had come.

Vaurel smoked calmly, but I have no doubt he felt much the same.

'It's time he was here,' I said at last, for the simple pleasure of breaking the oppressive silence.

Vaurel grunted.

'If he's coming,' I added.

'He'll come,' said Vaurel through his pipe-stem.

Then there came a sudden peremptory rat-tat on the great hall-door, which brought us both to our feet and the blood to our heads for a moment.

'*Le voilà!*' said Vaurel. 'I will let him in. You have your revolver, Monsieur Lamont?'

I nodded.

'Then at last the play begins;' and he went out into the hall.

I heard his, 'Ah, Monsieur le Colonel, it is you! Pray give yourself the trouble to enter.' The Colonel, I could hear, had not awaited the invitation, but was already in the hall.

'You are expected in the *salon*, Monsieur le Colonel,' said Vaurel suavely, and I heard him bolting the front door; then the firm ringing step came across the flags to the room where I was standing with my back to the fire.

'*Tiens!* it is you, Monsieur Lamont?' said the Colonel as he pushed aside the draught-curtain that hung over the door.

He halted for a moment on the threshold in evident surprise. Then he came forward, tossed his *képi* on the table, and threw off his military coat. I heard the door close behind him, and knew that Vaurel stood waiting inside.

'Yes, it is I, Monsieur le Colonel,' I replied in French, and his eyes gave a blink of surprise, and then settled into a look of suspicion.

'Won't you sit down?' I said. 'I have something to say to you, and some questions to ask on behalf of Mademoiselle des Comptes.'

He frowned and sat down. The reception was not what he had expected. He did not quite know what to make of it.

'Well, monsieur, and what are your questions?' he asked gruffly.

'In the first place, mademoiselle begs you to give her all the information you can in connection with the affair of her brother Gaston.'

The dark face grew black. 'I have no information to give to mademoiselle,' he said curtly.

'I know differently, Colonel Lepard, and I intend to have that information.'

'How, monsieur! You—intend—What talk is this?'

'Listen, Colonel Lepard,' I said quietly. 'Made-moiselle left here this morning with Madame de St Ouen and Monsieur Dieufoy by my request. You are alone here with myself and Prudent Vaurel, and you don't leave this house until you have disclosed the whole matter.'

'Ten thousand furies!' he shouted, springing up and blazing out like a live shell. 'Am I crazy, or are you?'

I said nothing, and only continued to eye him steadily.

'The contract is too big for you, Monsieur—Lamont, if that be your name. If you think you can squeeze me you are very much mistaken.'

I bowed, but held my peace, which only made him the more angry.

'See here,' he said roughly, 'if you or your poacher friend attempts to lay a finger on me I'll simply blow holes in you.'

He slipped his hand inside his tunic; but my hand had only to come out of my jacket-pocket, and I was first.

'Drop that instantly,' I said, 'or I fire.'

He was a very great scoundrel, but he was no coward. He probably felt that I had more to gain from him alive than dead, whereas he had everything to gain by killing me, and absolutely nothing to lose. He had been trapped into the house; he was being subject to menace. The law would certainly hold him guiltless.

If he thought these things they passed through his brain like a flash, for his revolver spoke instantly. The flash almost blinded me, and the bullet grazed my head.

The next moment Vaurel had flung round his arms a noose with a running knot and drawn it tight, and so held him powerless.

I thought he would have had a fit. All the blood in his body seemed to rush into his head and neck till he seemed like to burst, and he fairly foamed curses.

'Gently!' said Vaurel, giving him a shake. 'Your master the devil has handed you over to our care, Monsieur le Colonel, to purge some of the evil out of you. Take my advice and don't throw away any chance that is given you.'

Vaurel jerked him down into a chair in spite of his struggles, and twisted the rest of the rope round and round him till he could not move a limb.

'Now,' said Vaurel as he straightened himself from his task, 'that's what I call a neat job.'

The Colonel cursed us with every foul oath he could lay his tongue to, and with all the passion of impotence, and we had to wait till his strength gave out to get a chance of speaking.

'Now, listen,' I said when he was fairly spent, 'and you can think over it during the night. If you put us in the way of proving the innocence

of Gaston des Comptes you go free. If you refuse we hand you over to justice for the murder of your accomplice, Captain Zuyler'—At that he was suddenly silent, and the red passion in his face gave way to a black pallor. 'We know all about it,' I continued. 'The proofs are complete, and the motive is patent. It is your life for Gaston's. Think it out, Monsieur le Colonel. I shall see you in the morning.'

Vaurel tilted the chair back on to its hind-legs and dragged it scraping and groaning along the hallway to a small pantry at the back of the house, the window of which was very small and very high up—the room where Zuyler's body had lain three days before; and not one single word did the prisoner speak during this undignified progress. He was as silent as a sack of flour, as Vaurel said. His mind seemed to have struck ground on the fact that we knew all about the murder of Captain Zuyler, and it had not yet had time to get afloat again.

So the first step in our search for information was successfully accomplished. How far ahead the last one might be we could none of us foresee. We could only take things as they came; and, at all events, it was much to have Lepard in our hands, and to have brought him face to face with our demands and with the knowledge that his own personal safety lay in complying with them. We had dug the mine and laid the train, and our prisoner was tied to the powder-barrel; and he was aware of it. The opening of his mouth in the way we wanted it would set him free. All we could do was to await the result of his meditations.

'Monsieur Lamont,' Vaurel said, 'it would be as well for Colonel Lepard to return to Rennes to-night by the late train.'

'What on earth do you mean, Vaurel?' I gasped, wondering for a moment whether something had slipped in his brain also.

'Don't you see?' he said, with his eyes dancing. 'The folks in the village and at the station saw him arrive. If they don't see him go away they will suppose him still here; and if he is unreasonable we may have to keep him some time, in which case we don't want them to think that.'

'Well?'

'Well, they must see him go away again to-night, and then they will be satisfied and won't talk. One of us must go back dressed in the Colonel's coat and *képi*. It must be me, I think. You're too slim. I'm more of his shape; though, thank God! it's not simple fat. I'll get to the station just as the train is in; and with the hood drawn over my head, and them all half-asleep, they'll never notice. Then I'll get out at Bency as Prudent Vaurel, in my own cap and blouse, with the Colonel's things in a parcel, and I'll get back here by the road by two o'clock.'

'You think we may have to hold him some time?'

'Longer than we expected maybe, monsieur.'

You see, he knows as well as we do that if we give him up that won't help us one bit in M. Gaston's affair; and he will make the most of that. I'm thinking, too, it will help us to let him starve for a bit. There's nothing takes down the spunk in a man like that quicker than an empty stomach. You'll take a look now and again at that one upstairs,' he said as he got into Colonel Lepard's big coat and put the gold-braided *képi* on his head. 'Ah! don't I look fine? I always thought I should make a better officer than most of them, and—*me voilà!*—M. le Colonel Vaurel of the General Staff!'

He turned and twisted in front of the glass as pleased as a child with his new suit; and when he drew the hood of the coat over his head and tucked his beard inside the collar, it seemed likely enough that, in the dark, and on the jump, he would pass well enough for the Colonel.

'*Bien! au revoir, monsieur!*' he saluted me in the most approved style of haughty nonchalance, and I let him out at the front door and bolted it after him.

I took a candle and went upstairs to take a look at Roussel, with Boulot padding inquisitively after me wherever I went. Then I sought out mademoiselle's pink nest, where I had talked with her the night before; and after lighting the fire I sat down in her own soft chair, and let my thoughts dwell lovingly on the charming mistress of the mansion and of my heart.

It was just about two in the morning when Vaurel's knock sounded on the door, and I was glad to see his honest face again, for there was something depressing in the feeling of being shut up in the big house with those other two, even though they were both quite harmless.

'That's all right,' he said as he dropped into a chair. 'Colonel Lepard returned to Paris by the last train last night, and old Monsieur Leflo at the station will not forget it in a hurry. *Mon dieu!* how the Colonel did swear at him for not keeping the train waiting a minute longer, although the old gentleman could not possibly have known he was coming! He came very near to missing it, and jumped in when it was on the move, and then put out his head and swore at Monsieur Leflo till the old graybeard fairly shook with anger.' Vaurel laughed heartily at the recollection of his exploit, for M. Leflo, the *chef-de-gare*, was lofty in his manners and somewhat overbearing towards his inferiors; and Vaurel had evidently greatly enjoyed getting even with him for once.

In the morning we paid a visit to our prisoner, Boulot peering between our legs, and snuffling and growling uneasily at sight of him. He certainly was a sufficiently unpleasant object. He looked limp and shrunken and broken down; but a trace of the last night's spirit rose in him as the door opened, and his face was set in a grim scowl, which showed no present sign of giving in to our demands.

'Are you prepared now to give us the information we wish, Monsieur Lepard?' I asked.

But not a word would he say, though I could see, by the clench of his jaw and the throbbing pulse in his temple, that he was bursting with wrath and kept it in with difficulty.

'When you tell us all we want to know, and we have had time to test the truth of it, you shall go free,' I said; 'until then you stop here.'

No answer came, so we turned the key on him and left him to his thoughts.

We ostentatiously tied Boulot with a stout cord to the door-handle outside, and as we went down the hall we heard him blow a warning snuffle below the door, which deepened into a snarling roar as he tore at the crack with his great front paws, and seemed to be giving back curse for curse with the man inside.

The days passed, however, and the prisoner remained as dumb to us as though he had never spoken in this world. Much as I detested him and the things he had done, I could not but marvel at, and in a certain way admire, the steadfastness of purpose which bottled up even that fount of profanity, the letting loose of which would have given him such immense relief.

'I thought he was flabbier,' said Vaurel, greatly surprised at the way he held out. 'He's a man after all. Pity he's a bad one.'

'How is it all going to end?' I asked, with no little disturbance of mind, on the seventh night of the Colonel's imprisonment; for it looked as though we might go on this way for ever.

'God knows,' said Vaurel; 'but we've got him, and we'll stick to him.'

Our other patient meanwhile was mending. He was weak and worn with his exposure, and he had a hacking cough; but he seemed coming to his right mind, and was gaining strength every day.

Our plans, however, were threatened suddenly by two outside dangers, one of which we had taken no account of, because we had not reckoned on Lepard's holding out so long; and the other it had been impossible to foresee, because no human being can forecast the eccentricities of an unbalanced brain.

One day an unusual rap came at the front door, and Vaurel, opening it, was confronted by an officer in the uniform of a captain of Chasseurs.

'Is Monsieur le Colonel Lepard staying here?' he asked.

'No, monsieur,' said Vaurel, and I could well imagine the look of vacant surprise he would put on.

'But he has been here?'

'Yes, monsieur. Monsieur le Colonel came one night about a week ago' —

'Thursday of last week?' interjected the officer.

'That was it—exactly! Thursday of last week. I remember it was Thursday, because that was the day mademoiselle left.'

'Ah!' said the officer. 'Mademoiselle left on

Thursday—did she? And where has mademoiselle gone to?

'To Combours, monsieur, with Madame the Duchesse de St Ouen and Monsieur l'Abbé Dieufoy.'

'And Colonel Lepard came here after they had left?'

'The very same night, monsieur; and they left by the midday train.'

'And the Colonel?'

'Naturally, when he heard mademoiselle was gone, he went also. He returned, I understood, by the night train.'

Here Boulot and the Colonel had one of their little wrangles, and the hall resounded with snarls and yelps.

'What is all that?' asked the Captain.

'My bulldog after a rat,' said Vaurel. 'Has monsieur made inquiries at the station?'

'Yes; they tell me the same thing; but I was bound to ask here also. I thank you, my friend. Good-day!'

'Good-day, Monsieur le Capitaine, and I hope you will find Monsieur le Colonel all right. He is a brave man!' and with great enjoyment Vaurel watched the Captain return the way he had come.

It was evident that the Colonel's disappearance was beginning to excite suspicion at headquarters, and this set us to the discussion of further plans for his safe keeping and the attainment of our end. Before we were able to arrive at any decision in the matter our anxieties were suddenly piled into heaps in another direction, when Vaurel came bounding into my room one morning before I was up, in a state of great agitation, and reported that Roussel had disappeared.

'He is gone, monsieur!' he cried.

'Gone? Who? The Colonel?' and I jumped up and began dressing in haste.

'No, the other—the madman.'

'But how gone, Vaurel? Where to?'

'I left him sleeping quietly when I turned in,' he said. 'Now his window is open, and he is gone. He is off his head again, I expect, and has made for the woods.'

'Has he taken his clothes with him?'

'I did not look. I saw he was no longer there, and came to tell you at once.'

We went into Roussel's room; and a moment's examination showed us that he had simply got out of bed, opened the window, and scrambled down in some inexplicable way. It was evident that he had gone with no more clothing than his night-shirt.

'I'm afraid all your care is wasted, my friend,' I said. 'His brain has evidently slipped again, just as we thought he was getting better.'

'We must get help from the village and try and find him again,' said Vaurel.

Then all the difficulties of the position suddenly flashed upon me.

'No; that won't do,' I said. 'What will they do if they catch him?'

'*Mon dieu!* I never thought of that.'

'They think he murdered Captain Zuyler, and if they catch him they will hand him over to justice. Then we could only set matters right by handing over the Colonel and telling all we know, and then good-bye to all our hopes.'

'That is so,' replied Vaurel, scratching his head helplessly. 'I half-wish I had left him to die in the woods. He is going to upset the whole matter, curse him!'

We were greatly troubled by this unfortunate matter, which trebled all our anxieties and rendered almost futile the discussion of further plans concerning the Colonel; for they might all be blown to the winds at a moment's notice by the capture of the madman by the villagers.

Vaurel ranged the woods all that day in search of him, but returned in a state of hopeless despondency and black anger.

'If I come across him I'll break his neck,' he growled; 'after all the care I gave him, to play us this trick.'

I persuaded him to go up to Mère Thibaud's in the evening, for he was sure to hear there if Roussel's escape had yet become known to the villagers.

He returned about nine o'clock, and I saw as soon as I opened the door to him that something had upset him. He was in a state of pallid anger. He had a great swollen bruise on his forehead, the blood from which had run down over his face, and for a time he could only gasp out angry oaths.

At length he explained that Roussel had been seen, or his ghost, by the miller when driving through Bessancy woods; for a thing in white jumped out from the trees, ran in front of the horse, and screamed and flung its arms about till the poor beast nearly died of fright. Juliot threatened to put a bullet through him if he came across him; although, he said, a priest and holy water was what was wanted for such a job. Vaurel had himself seen him.

'Yes, monsieur, then I came home, and I took the short cut through the wood, and hang me if he didn't jump out on me just the same way!—flung up his arms and gibbered and snickered, and then away through the dark. I got such a turn that I stumbled and knocked my head against a tree!—and he pointed to the big bruise on his forehead!—and when I found my feet he was gone.'

I fear our fount of charity as regards Roussel was pretty well run dry, and we both devoutly wished he might break his neck before he knocked all our plans into a cocked hat by getting himself caught.

(To be continued.)

A BENGALI KITE.

By R. W. K. GODWIN.



ORIENTAL methods differ considerably from those of this country even in so small a matter as the making of a kite. Naturally, environment has a deal—in this case perhaps all—to do with the matter. An English boy flies his kite in the fields, with plenty of room for a long run and plenty of energy to be spent in the enjoyment of the fun. His kite is a heavy, well-made affair, with a good long tail, and with wings or tassels on its sides. To the lathes used in its construction is attached stout twine, sometimes even string, as such a kite will take a considerable amount of holding in a good breeze. Perhaps the excitement of getting the kite to fly is the most exhilarating feature; but there is a great pleasure even to boys of a larger growth in watching the gyrations of a kite in the heavens. A good deal of science or knack, too, is necessary to be a successful kite-flyer, and much may be learnt concerning one of the greatest forces—wind—from such a simple amusement.

However, this is digressing from my subject. In the East it is all so different. As stated, environment makes itself even still more felt in the matter of the making of a Bengali kite. We do not fly our kites in the fields in Bengal; no, kite-flying must be done in a far less boisterous manner, from the coolest and most common resort, the housetops. This necessitates a kite so constructed that practically no run is wanted; it is of course necessary that the minimum of perspiration be produced. So the kite is made tailless and wingless, of tissue-paper and thin slips of bamboo, this latter material being a local growth. It is flown with cotton or thread instead of string, and will ascend in the faintest breeze.

The Bengali kite is constructed in the most characteristic listless Oriental fashion—merely a square of tissue-paper, the side of it measuring twelve, or at the most fifteen, inches in length, along one diagonal of which is gummed a very thin slip of bamboo, forming the length of the kite. From corner to corner of the width another slip of bamboo is attached, but this time bent to a semicircle formed *inside* the square. The difference in appearance from the English kite is that in the latter the semicircle is formed *outside* the square. This bent slip of bamboo is attached to the tissue-paper in the most fragile manner; it is secured merely at the corners, and only serves the purpose of keeping the tissue-paper extended flat and taut. Where the tail should commence a small square of paper is attached, just about sufficient to cause one end to be recognised from the other. The cotton is now attached

and the kite balanced so as to form a suitable resisting plane to the air. The whole often weighs less than *one ounce*.

In the evenings in Bengal a steady breeze blows inland from the bay. It is then that from the housetops the little European community in the smaller towns often amuse themselves with the sport of kite-flying; and there is sport in it, as I shall presently show. As many as a dozen of these little Bengali kites may be seen in the air at a time, of all colours, and many of them parti-coloured, giving a very pretty effect. The experts in the game would fly a tandem of, say, a red and a blue kite. The ability to do this, although requiring a little skill, may be soon acquired with practice. One kite is sent up on a couple of hundred yards of thread, then another on about a hundred yards; the two threads are then knotted together and thus connected with a single line, which may be run out several hundred yards more.

The inland breeze from the bay is so suitable, being gentle and steady, for flying the kites that no difficulty whatever is experienced in causing them to ascend; they will fly straight away from the hand, which is, of course, necessary in so confined a space as a housetop. The line may be paid out quickly, and in a few moments a considerable altitude is attained. It is remarkable, too, what a great amount of air-pressure these little Bengali kites will stand—on hauling them down, the sides of the tissue-paper will often be found serrated with the wind like a saw-edge. They will fly equally well in this country when suitable atmospheric conditions prevail, as I have often proved.

When a number of kites were flying of an evening, of course some would get in the way of others, and this started the sport. By judicious handling of a kite its line could be jockeyed across the line of another, sawing the latter through, releasing the kite, and thus removing one opponent from the field, greatly to the amusement of the remainder of the kite-fliers, and proportionately to the chagrin of its owner. Then evening after evening the discomfited one would try with a fresh kite to pay back with interest the injury he had received. This soon led to the survival of the fittest.

All cotton lines were quickly put out of the field, and thread was the order of the day. The great success of one competitor made us all suspicious that he possessed some undue advantage, and at last the secret leaked out: he had applied glass-powder to his line by means of some gummy substance. This was a trick he had probably borrowed from the Chinese, who

are adepts in kite-flying as in many other scientific amusements. For a while he was cutting our threads right and left; and, being an old hand at the flying, all the fun was for some time on his side. From the time his secret was discovered a demand sprang up in the village for thread so treated, of which the dealers were not slow in taking advantage; and we were once more on an equality.

The greatest success that fell to my lot in the game was with a kite made with half-black and half-white tissue-paper. It was a splendid flier, and from its very colour, or absence of colour, could be distinguished a great distance off. After bringing down a couple of opponents, it became known as the 'Pirate,' and accordingly received a great deal of attention from all coloured kites, which might aptly be described in such a connection as 'flags of all nationalities.'

For several evenings in succession the 'Pirate' promptly tackled all challengers, and indeed for a whole week seemed invincible. But as all champions must have their day and all records go by the board, one evening the 'Pirate' was successfully engaged by a red kite; and as my

line was severed, and the good old 'Pirate' floated away in the distance, a yell of exultation was raised by all the occupants of the neighbouring housetops. The 'Pirate' had brought down five of his kind; and though I made and flew many other black-and-white Bengali kites, I never succeeded in building another 'Pirate.'

If by these few notes I have raised any interest in what is certainly the good fresh-air fun of kite-flying, I shall be gratified. There are numerous forms of kites besides the ordinary English pattern; in fact, many varieties of box-kites may be obtained commercially in this country. That the latter should have been thought of sufficient importance to be patented in many countries shows that kite-flying is on the increase as an amusement; and the art has now been taken regularly into the service of meteorological science. Special kinds and combinations of kites have been invented for the purpose, and are equipped with automatic recording thermometers, barometers, &c. In 1900 it was reported that a box-kite had safely returned, with its records, from a height of 14,000 feet.

THE BISHOP AND THE CONSTABLE.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER IV.

FOR a few minutes the room in which the events already described had taken place remained empty, the silence broken only by the whistling of birds in the garden and the shouts and laughter of light-hearted youths and maids as the boats went by on the river. Then Helen and Katie came hurriedly in again, glanced anxiously round the room and out of the window, and finding no sign of either of the unfortunate young men, gazed at each other in despair. Even the usually irrepressible and energetic Katie felt helpless in the face of the absurd, but in their eyes anything but laughable, complications in which they had so suddenly and unexpectedly become involved. If they had simply been spectators of what had taken place—if Frank and Arthur had been total strangers to them—no doubt Jewson's arbitrary proceedings would have been a source of infinite amusement to them; but, as it was, not a smile illumined their pale and tearful countenances. Utterly ignorant of legal formalities, they conjured up dreadful visions of what might happen to Frank and Arthur before they could effect their release, in which handcuffs, treadmills, and unsightly garments marked with the broad-arrow played a prominent part.

'If I have to endure this suspense much longer,' exclaimed Katie, 'I shall go crazy—I know I shall. If I were only a man I could

do something; but as it is I have to sit still and drink tea when I feel as if I could—oh! I don't know what.'

Helen, whose naturally sweet temper was beginning to be soured at the thought of Arthur immured in a cell at the police station, eyed her coldly.

'Things wouldn't have been half so bad,' she said, 'if you'd only let Arthur explain everything at first.'

'Wouldn't they?' exclaimed Katie, who was now exasperated beyond endurance. 'Then I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll explain everything now. I'll tell the Bishop everything from beginning to end. There's nothing else to do, and I'll do it.'

Unprepared for such very decided action, Helen feebly attempted to expostulate; but Katie waved her aside and energetically pulled the bell.

'These people are stone-deaf,' she exclaimed when no one appeared, and she rang it again more violently than before.

Mary opened the door with no very amiable expression on her usually pleasant face.

'Did you ring?' she asked sharply.

'I should think I did ring,' retorted Katie. 'Be good enough to inform the Bishop that I very particularly wish to speak to him for a moment.'

'Well, you can't speak to him,' answered Mary pertly.

'What do you mean, girl?' exclaimed Katie indignantly. 'Where is the Bishop? I shall go to him myself.'

'Well, if you'll take my advice, you'll be off before you get into trouble. That's what the missis told me to say—"Tell them to be off before they get into trouble."

Katie flushed crimson at the girl's impudent tone.

'What do you mean by this outrageous insolence?' she exclaimed. 'Where is the Bishop?'

'He's in the lock-up; that's where he is,' retorted Mary, 'or on the way to it.'

'The Bishop in the lock-up!' cried the horror-stricken girls.

'Yes; he's took up on a charge of obtaining money under false pretences. There was a mistake about the other gentlemen. They've been let out, and he's took up.'

Overwhelmed with consternation, the girls stared at each other with white, scared faces.

'Oh dear, this is simply frightful!' said Katie at last. 'Whatever shall we do?'

'There is only one thing we can do now,' almost sobbed Helen. 'Whatever the result may be, we must go to him at once and tell him the whole truth. Oh! I wish—I do wish—we'd done it at first. Come at once, Katie. Perhaps we can overtake him before he gets to the police station.'

'Yes, yes,' said Katie, 'let us go—let us go at once.'

But before they reached the door Arthur and Frank, once more clothed in their own costumes, stepped in through the window with somewhat sheepish and embarrassed countenances, urged by the laudable intention of explaining everything to the Bishop. The girls shrank away from them.

'Go away,' cried Katie. 'Don't speak to us. Go away. You—you don't know what you've done.'

'Yes, yes, go away,' exclaimed Helen; 'we never want to see you again.'

'Eh—what? Why, what's the matter?' asked Ambrose. 'Where's the Bishop?'

'We're going to him now,' answered Katie, 'and you'd better go away at once. I—I don't know what he'll say or do.'

'But where is he?' cried Ambrose impatiently. 'Why can't you tell us where he is?—Here, you, girl—what's your name?—Mary, where's the Bishop?'

'He's at the police station,' answered Mary promptly; 'that's where he is, or on the way to it. He's took up.'

'Took up!' echoed the horrified young men.

'Yes,' sobbed Katie; 'a bishop taken up on a charge of obtaining money under false pretences. It's—it's simply dreadful.'

'Good heavens!' murmured Arthur, wiping the perspiration from his brow. 'This is positively tragic. You see what a mess your silly trick has got us into, Frank.'

'If you'd shown a little common-sense we should never have got into a mess at all,' an-

swered Ambrose irritably. 'Just one word of explanation would have put a stop to all these preposterous complications. Why couldn't you have told the Bishop the truth at once?'

'Well, upon my word, that is pretty cool,' exclaimed Arthur indignantly. 'Why, man alive! it was entirely for your sake that I didn't explain things to the Bishop.'

'Well, as it turns out now it would have been much better for both of us if you had done so,' retorted Ambrose.

'Of course it would,' said Katie emphatically, 'because it'll all have to come out now—every bit of it. You might have foreseen that we should have to explain everything sooner or later.'

Arthur stared, opened his mouth and shut it again, and continued to gaze at them in speechless astonishment.

'Yes, it'll come out now, sure enough,' continued Ambrose. 'That ass of a bobby has got our names and addresses, and he's certain to show them to the Bishop. Look here, Arthur, we'd better bolt. I can't face it out.'

'But what about the Bishop?' exclaimed Arthur, finding his tongue at last. 'We can't leave him in the clutches of that thick-headed constable.'

'Pooh! The Bishop can take care of himself. He'll just prove his identity, and be back here in five minutes.'

But Arthur was no longer disposed to follow meekly in Ambrose's footsteps. Like the proverbial worm, he began to turn.

'Well, I think we ought to stop and face it out,' he rejoined decidedly. 'It's the straightforward thing to do, and I'm going to do it. What do you say, Helen?'

'I certainly think you ought to do so,' replied Helen.

'I don't agree with you,' said Ambrose. 'I think it would be much better to wait until he cools down and begins to laugh at the whole thing. It's impossible that he can take it seriously when he's had time to think it over. What do you say, Katie?'

'Oh, do what you like,' replied Katie despairingly. 'That letter hasn't been posted, and I'm perfectly sure never will be. What does it matter about anything else?'

'Pooh! It's no use being too tragic about the business,' rejoined Ambrose. 'We've just got into a scrape, and we'll have to make the best of it. After all, I don't mind having it out with the Bishop if you think it better.'

'Well, you'll have to whether you like or not,' said Arthur, who was glancing out of the window, 'because he's here.'

Ambrose turned hurriedly towards the door as if contemplating flight a second time, but thought better of it, and wheeled round again to confront the stately figure of the Bishop, who entered through the window, followed by the downcast Jewson. For a moment he stood grimly eyeing

the flushed and embarrassed countenances of the young men and women who stood before him like so many naughty children about to be reprimanded by a justly incensed schoolmaster.

'Ah!' he said at length, 'you did not expect to see me so soon, I presume. Now, permit me to say that I know everything, and you may therefore spare yourselves any embarrassing explanations. I may add that a telegram has just arrived to say that the real impostor is in custody.'

He turned to Arthur and held out his hand.

'Mr Dale,' he said, 'I am a man of few words; and when I do speak I like to speak plainly and to the point. I have done you an injustice, and I wish to acknowledge it at once. Your conduct throughout this affair has been that of a chivalrous and honourable gentleman. I knew your poor father at college, and I know you very well by report. I am also aware,' he added, with a twinkle in his eye, 'of other circumstances of which I am supposed to be ignorant. I shall be pleased if you will dine with me this evening.'

'Oh, my lord!' stammered Arthur gratefully, as the Bishop shook him warmly by the hand, and Helen, blushing rosilily, glanced at him shyly.

The Bishop turned to Ambrose, and produced the still unstamped letter from his pocket, while Katie and the curate eyed him apprehensively.

'You see this letter, Ambrose?' he asked.

'Yes, my lord.'

'You are aware of the nature of its contents?'

'Yes, my lord.'

'I was about to post it as soon as I had procured a stamp. I have changed my mind.'

He deliberately tore it up and threw the fragments into the fireplace.

'Oh, my lord!' exclaimed poor Katie, while Ambrose gazed ruefully at the torn letter.

His lordship's eyes, hitherto somewhat grim and stern, began to twinkle pleasantly, and he smiled on both of them benignly.

'I may say that your boyish escapade has nothing to do with the matter,' he said to Ambrose. 'Ten minutes ago I saw an announcement in to-day's paper which suggested it. Possibly—of course I am not sure—but possibly that letter on the mantelpiece, addressed to yourself, contains some further information. You had better read it, I think.'

Ambrose immediately pounced on the letter and tore it open, while the others watched him in breathless suspense.

'Oh, this is too good!' he exclaimed excitedly.

'I say, what do you think—eh?'

'What? What?' they chorussed.

'Why, Jenkins—dear old Jenkins, bless him!—is—is married.'

'Married?'

'Yes, married a wealthy wife—and—and resigned, so that I'm practically the Rector of Westbeach.'

In that supreme moment Katie forgot the respect due to a dignitary of the Church, and leaping on a chair waved her hand in the air.

'Three cheers for Jenkins!' she cried. 'Hurrah!'

Carried away by her enthusiasm, the rest joined in, and then suddenly stopped and looked guiltily at the Bishop. But his lordship regarded her with a fatherly smile.

'Ah, youth, youth!' said he. 'You young people almost make me wish that I were a boy again. We'd better drive back at once and all dine together.'

To this arrangement every one joyfully agreed; but as they were going out Jewson approached the Bishop.

'I hope, your lordship—if you'll excuse me, your lordship—won't say more about this little affair than you can help, your lordship,' said he.

The Bishop regarded him with twinkling eyes. 'Experience of the world has taught me, my good man,' he rejoined, 'that we are none of us infallible, not even the police. I hope this little adventure will teach you the same lesson. I shall say nothing to prejudice you with your superiors.'

'Thank you, my lord,' said Jewson, and drew back with a salute.

A few minutes later, with Mary at his elbow, he stood watching the carriage bowling rapidly away along the sunlit road.

'Ah, Joe!' said Mary, with a mournful shake of the head, 'it didn't come off, you see.'

'Not this time, Mary,' said the crestfallen constable; 'but just you wait a bit, my girl—just you wait a bit.'

UNDERCURRENTS OF MANX LIFE.



POPULAR as the toy kingdom of the Isle of Man has become as a holiday resort, it remains in some respects nearly as much a *terra incognita* as it was thirty years ago.

People visit it, admire its scenery, 'do' the show-places with more or less thoroughness; but they rarely get below the surface of

Manx life at any point, and never see wherein it differs from that of the 'continent'—or, to employ more familiar and correct phraseology, England, Scotland, and Wales. The native almost invariably uses that word in speaking of the mainland, as if it were alien soil, though, of course, Mona's Isle is really the pivot of Great Britain, if it forms no part of it.

What little the average visitor to the island does glean of its peculiarities is often to his disadvantage. As the new-fledged M.P. learns the rules of the House of Commons by breaking them, so the holiday-maker becomes versed in some Manx laws by unwittingly infringing them. If he is accompanied by his dog, it is probable that he will be summoned because, being ignorant that the license he possesses has no force in the island, he has not taken out a Manx license. Much to their amazement and disgust, visitors have been called upon to appear at the High Bailiff's Court to answer for this offence, and have been fined a nominal sum. Occasionally even people settled in Douglas never discover that they are law-breakers in this matter till a zealous constable calls them to account. Then they are taught a lesson in geography.

Should the impecunious visitor try to evade his liabilities, he will find out something more about local law; he will discover that he can be detained as security. Any person, other than a native-born Manxman, attempting to leave the island without first paying debts incurred there can be imprisoned till he pays or comes to a satisfactory arrangement with his creditor—a method of dealing with defaulters which is absolutely necessary for the protection of the hotel and boarding-house keepers. Numbers of visitors spend money so recklessly that they have not sufficient to meet their bills; and instead of frankly explaining their position, they sometimes seek for a surreptitious means of escape. As there are no pawnshops in the island, their only course is flight. Some succeed in getting clear away, and are never heard of again; others are traced and proceeded against through the county court; but as a small amount is not worth the trouble, even if the address of the debtor is known, it is only when the sum is large that the creditor comes to England and prosecutes his claim. Other runaways are pounced upon just as they are pluming themselves on their smartness—when, in fact, they are on board the steamer; and, humiliated and crestfallen, with hundreds of curious eyes turned upon them, they are taken into custody. Visitors of the 'bilking' type thus prolong their stay in the island beyond the time they had fixed upon for departure.

In the same way the Manx take care to keep with them other persons who would show them a clean pair of heels. They have the power of detaining employes and others who have not fulfilled their legal obligations. On receiving her wages, a servant in a Douglas hotel told her master that she was bent on returning to Liverpool next day. To this the caterer replied that, as it was the height of the season, he must insist upon a month's notice, according to agreement. Then the maid, after the manner of certain of her kind, became insolent, defied her employer, and ended by stating that she would sail by the early boat in the morning at all costs. The hotelkeeper thereupon procured a detention order; and as a

result the woman was arrested on the steamer and brought ashore, where the police explained to her that she would either have to serve a month's notice or return the money she had received on the previous day. Having vindicated his authority, however, the hotelkeeper was content to waive his rights. 'You can go now that I have taught you a lesson,' he said to the chagrined domestic.

If the islanders prevent some people from leaving them, they are not less firm in banishing others who wish to stay. Minor offenders are sometimes liberated on condition that they remove themselves with all speed to England, just as our rural justices, with an eye to economy, are prone to pardon begging and other venial offences on the prisoners promising to go elsewhere forthwith. Paupers from the United Kingdom are got rid of in a similar manner. They may be chargeable to the Manx authorities for a day or two, but they are quickly put on a luggage-boat and cast back into England. Expulsion is carried out so expeditiously that in many cases the labour-test is not applied. It is found to be more convenient and more economical to dispense with that formality than to insist upon it.

In the matter of taxation the toy kingdom is as unique as in its defence of its own interests. There is no income-tax, no succession-duties chargeable against the estates of deceased persons, no highway or turnpike tolls. Roads are maintained by the revenue from two sources: a small tax upon every wheel and shod hoof, and a levy upon every male inhabitant, who must give a day's work on the road or its equivalent in cash. The Manx know nothing of stamp-duties on receipts, cheques, promissory notes, &c., so these contribute nothing to the revenue. In fact, stamps are used for postage only. Happy—thrice happy— islanders!

The immunity of the Manx community from the imposts under which we groan is, of course, only possible because they, as essentially a home-ruled community, enact their own laws. While in important fiscal and other matters the Manx legislature keeps closely in touch with Westminster, following with Bills similar to those passed by the imperial parliament, it ignores many statutes and promulgates others on its own initiative. Thus local law differs in many respects from that of Great Britain. Besides the Acts affecting taxation, there are statutes relative to land and other property practically unknown in our courts. Open voting still prevails at Manx elections; but, on the other hand, the House of Keys has extended the franchise to women. In Mona's Isle, too, as in some parts of America and in Australia, a publican can be punished for selling intoxicating liquor to a 'known' drunkard. By that term is meant a man who, having been convicted for drunkenness three times within the year, has been inhibited from purchasing alcoholic beverages for

twelve months; and the publican is liable to a penalty of ten pounds for serving such a man. This is a check on habitual tipplers in the rural parts of the island; but in the towns these men easily evade recognition. It is generally acknowledged that the working of the Act is not quite satisfactory. The Chief Constable has pointed out that there is nothing to prevent declared inebriates from sending for drink.

One of the most singular of Manx laws is directed against the operations of insular Isaac Gordons. So far back as the year 1691 the Tynwald passed an Act forbidding the exaction of more than 6 per cent. interest per annum on loans. It provided, further, that any bond, contract, or the like stipulating a higher rate of interest should be 'utterly void,' and that any persons doing anything contrary 'to the tenour or meaning' of the statute should forfeit and lose treble the value of the 'moneys, wares, merchandises, or other things so lent, bargained, sold, or exchanged'—a most comprehensive and effective enactment of the seventeenth century Manx legislature. If this is not a sufficient check on the practices of the unscrupulous usurer, where will you find a better one? It is still in force, having proved so useful as a safeguard that it has never been repealed or even materially altered.

The laws of the toy kingdom are no less thorough in protecting the public against loss in holding paper-money, which is issued in one-pound notes. Before a bank is permitted to issue its notes a license, which costs twenty pounds per annum, is required; and for every issue it must deposit in the hands of trustees appointed by the Governor and the Council security to the face value, that payment may be assured. Each note is, therefore, practically guaranteed by the Government. Once notes are issued, they circulate for a number of years, and have not the short life of the crisp slips honoured by the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street. A Manx note is a thing to be picked up with the tongs if microbes have any terrors for you. It tells its own history, which, as in the case of Russian paper-money, can be gleaned from its smell. Some of the Manx, however, recently showed that they were either ignorant or had forgotten that the local notes are safe. When Dumbell's Bank suspended payment there was a wild rush to cash its notes similar to that which took place, with more reason, after the disastrous failure of the City of Glasgow Bank. The scare was quite unnecessary; and an Englishman who happened to be in a rural part of the island knew it. Happening to have a large sum of gold in his possession, he bought up all the notes he could get at a discount, and netted a handsome profit on the transaction. For once the Manx were caught napping.

In bygone years the people of the toy kingdom

in the Irish Sea had their own customs and superstitions; but these are now almost extinct, like their language. You may still see a straw broken to clinch a bargain. The fishermen, again, cherish all manner of strange beliefs—for instance, that the third boat going out of harbour is sure to be unlucky; and, as a consequence, there is no third boat, for, after the first and second lead the way, a number follow abreast, keeping as nearly as possible in line. The Manx, moreover, have lost little of their intense clannishness, which betrays itself in many ways; notably they are addicted to intermarrying, which is largely responsible for the insanity occurring in the island.

Notwithstanding all this, the inhabitants of Manxland—at all events such of them as live in the towns—are yearly approximating more closely in modes of thought and in habits to those 'foreigners' whose housing and feeding in the summer months constitute their chief industry. It is mainly these peaceful invaders who have wrought the change, though the English who have taken up residence in the island have doubtless been a potent factor. Of late years a goodly number of immigrants have deliberately settled in Manxland, permanently to enjoy its scenery and its bracing, ozone-laden air. I say 'deliberately,' because people have been known to pitch their tents in the island more by chance than of set purpose. A rough passage—that and nothing more—has led to their abandoning England for ever. They have left Liverpool or Fleetwood or Belfast with the intention of merely paying the Isle of Man a visit; but they have suffered so horribly from *mal de mer* on the voyage that they have been more dead than alive on reaching Douglas, and have there and then registered a vow never to return. A few of such faint-hearted folk are still in Manxland, and there they will remain to the end of the chapter. There is another reason why the apparently superfluous qualification 'deliberately' is necessary. It is that the island has been, and occasionally is still, used as a place of exile. Some years ago the 'remittance man' was as well known, under another name, in Douglas as he is in the colonies. A number of unruly, spendthrift sons were in the town, each forbidden to set foot in England on pain of having his allowance cut off. But, of course, the involuntary English residents are greatly outnumbered by those who live in the little kingdom from considerations of health.

As the more desirable class of inhabitants increases and the island is brought more and more into touch with this country, other changes will inevitably take place in Manx life. The changes will be slow and gradual, for conservatism is one of the leading traits of the native character; but come they must in the natural order of things.

THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

ANTARCTIC EXPLORATION.



HE paper recently read before the Royal Geographical Society by Mr Borchgrevink, on 'The Result of Sir George Newnes's Antarctic Expedition,' was full of interest to an audience which was in full sympathy with the lecturer. The ship *Southern Cross*, which carried the expedition southwards, first struck the ice-pack on 30th December 1898, and on 1st March the Union-jack was formally hoisted on Victoria Land. The vessel then returned to New Zealand, leaving ten adventurous spirits behind—the first human beings who had ever attempted to winter on Antarctic land. Many valuable observations and collections were made at constant risk to life and limb, both men and dogs suffering severely from frost-bite. The scenery is of the most awful and impressive character, the cliffs rising in many places to thousands of feet in height. Heavy gales were common. There are no bears, foxes, musk-oxen, or reindeer, such as are met with in Arctic regions; and for this reason the food-stores had to be quadrupled. Numerous sledge-journeys were made, and in one of these the farthest point south ever reached by man was achieved. Mr Borchgrevink strongly advises the employment of plenty of dogs in similar expeditions, not only on account of their practical use, but also because they are such companionable beasts, and help men to forget the engrossing troubles of the moment.

A REMEDY FOR DEAR GAS.

When the price of coal goes up it is only natural that the price of illuminating gas which is made from it should rise in sympathy with it; and although we cannot expect the gas companies to work at a loss, there is evidence that some of them at least are not too generous to their customers. No one has yet solved the problem why London gas on one side of the Thames should be sold at about 25 per cent. more than gas of a similar quality on the other side of the river. As a corrective to serious complaints constantly being raised against the present state of things, Professor Silvanus Thompson has recently proposed a drastic remedy. He points out that a non-illuminating gas, giving a blue flame like a spirit-lamp, can be manufactured at about half the cost of ordinary household gas. This gas is equally efficient for heating and cooking purposes, and can be used for driving gas-engines; more than this, it will render the Welsbach mantle incandescent, and can be made luminous for ordinary gas-jets by the addition of albo-carbon.

Professor Thompson recommends those interested in London industrial enterprises to start factories for the manufacture of this non-luminous gas, and says that there could not be any effective opposition from the existing companies, as their monopoly only extends to the supply of illuminating gas.

ARTIFICIAL DIAMONDS.

Among the many who have sought to solve the problem of producing artificial diamonds the name of M. Moissan stands out prominently; and although the gems he produces are barely one-fiftieth of an inch in diameter, they are veritable crystals of carbon. The method he adopts is to saturate molten iron with carbon, and then to suddenly cool the metal, with the result that it forms nodules with a jacket of chilled iron, the contents being subjected by the strain to enormous pressure. The metal is then slowly dissolved away by chemical means, and the tiny crystals of carbon—diamonds—remain. In a note recently brought before the Royal Society of Edinburgh by Dr R. Sydney Marsden, the writer calls attention to the fact that he read a paper before that society ten years ago describing a similar process for producing diamonds, and he naturally complains that in the wide publication given to M. Moissan's experiments his own claims to priority are ignored.

PETROLEUM FOR LOCOMOTIVES.

The great rise in the price of coal will have the effect of calling attention once more to the use of liquid fuel for steam-raising, and all information as to what is being done in this direction becomes a matter of pressing interest. On many of the Russian lines of railway petroleum products are being used with good results. The first consideration is that the combustion of the naphtha employed should take place without any appreciable residue; the compound should be of a greenish colour, with a boiling-point not below 140 degrees centigrade. Cisterns containing the naphtha are placed at certain stations on the lines, and the locomotives store under the water-tank of the tender what is required for a run. Metallic filters are placed in the cisterns and reservoirs to keep out sand and foreign substances.

THE CUCKOO AND ITS EGG.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the cuckoo deposits its egg in the nest of some bird which it selects to play the rôle of foster-mother; but hitherto it has been a moot question how the cuckoo conveys the egg to the nest. It has been generally supposed that the bird carries it in its

beak, and several observers have stated that they have seen the egg so carried. In the June number of the *Zoologist*, Mr A. H. Meiklejohn states how he was fortunate enough to be a witness of the entire transaction, and he is of opinion that the throat of the bird carries the egg. He states that the cuckoo which formed the subject of his observation was constantly opening her mouth during a preliminary encounter with the robins whose nest she assailed. He is certain that the egg could not have been laid in the ordinary way in the nest, and that the throat of the cuckoo presented a slightly distended appearance, which might well have been due to the presence of the egg.

ARMOURD TRACTION-TRAIN.

The great change which has been effected during late years in the methods of warfare could not be better illustrated than by the recent successful trials of an armoured traction-train—that is to say, a train of bullet-proof trucks carrying howitzers and field-pieces drawn by a similarly protected traction-engine. Among the many useful lessons taught by the war in the Transvaal is the necessity for mobility, not only in the case of troops, but of heavy guns; and the armoured train is intended to take the place of those huge but unwieldy and slow teams of bullocks which enabled the Boers to so readily move their big guns from place to place. The British armoured train has been constructed by Messrs Fowler & Co., of Leeds, to the requirements of the War Department. It consists of a special road-locomotive with three trucks, the engine being of seventy-five brake-horse-power. The armour on both engine and trucks consists of half-inch nickel-steel plates manufactured by the secret process of Messrs Cammell, of Sheffield, which has already been noted in these columns. It is considered by experts that this armoured train, which is capable of operating quite independently of a railroad, is a very great advance in military science. It is destined for South Africa; but probably by the time it arrives at the front the need for its employment will happily have ceased.

SPIRIT FOR LIGHT LOCOMOTIVES.

Now that horseless vehicles are becoming comparatively common in our thoroughfares—although we are still far behind our French neighbours in recognising their undoubted advantages—it is very necessary to call attention to the dangers arising from the careless handling of the more volatile descriptions of petroleum employed in their engines. The vapour given off by these liquids is of such an inflammable nature that it is not safe to pour it from one vessel to another by artificial light or within several yards of a fire. For the same reason the containing vessels must be thoroughly sound and properly closed,

so as to prevent any chance of leakage. In view of the damages which may arise from ignorance concerning the nature of these volatile liquids, the Home Secretary has recently issued certain regulations, dated April 26, 1900, made by the Secretary of State under section 5 of the Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896.

THE ECLIPSE SHADOW-BANDS.

The occurrence of a solar eclipse has once more called attention to that strange appearance which is known as 'the shadow-bands.' These are ripple-like bands which are seen to chase one another across the surface of the earth a few minutes before and just after totality. The appearance has always aroused much interest; but no definite explanation of the phenomenon has as yet been formulated. One of the best theories which we have noted is that of a correspondent of the *Scientific American*, who paid special attention to this question when observing the recent eclipse, and was able to watch the shadow-bands as they traversed a broad level path of white sand. He says that the bands—or 'shadow-lines,' as he prefers to call them—are similar to the shadows which would appear on the bottom of a shallow pool of water when the wind ruffled its surface. They were six or eight inches apart; and he attributes their appearance to the passage of the moon's shadow causing an undulating motion in the atmosphere close to the earth's surface—that is, 'to the undulations of a stratum of heated air passing directly over our heads.' He further notes that the cold at the time was distinctly perceptible, and that his party had to resort to wraps.

ATMOSPHERIC RESISTANCE TO LOCOMOTION.

It was long ago computed that the greatest hindrance to the progress of a railway train at all velocities exceeding forty miles an hour was the resistance of the atmosphere, and yet nothing has been done to minimise this loss of speed. There was a rumour some years ago of locomotive engines being built in France with pointed ends; but we have heard nothing of them since. Experiments are, however, now in progress on the Baltimore and Ohio Railway with a sheathed train—that is to say, a train built so that all projections which serve to hold the air are removed, the ends of the cars covered, and the whole train representing one sinuous body with smooth sides. Very remarkable results have been attained with this train, which cleaves its way through the resisting air much as a fish rushes rapidly through the water.

Another improvement is indicated on the new Central (electric) Railway, which bores its way eighty feet below the principal streets. The line dips between each of the stations, so that the train starts more easily from one station and can pull up more easily at the next.

This arrangement is said to give a considerable economy of electric current.

DUST.

What is called 'dust' in London is really domestic refuse of all kinds, and has long been a source of difficulty and anxiety to the local authorities. Time was when it was eagerly sought after by the farmers of the home counties, who were willing to pay for it and remove it at their own cost. But the land became so surfeited with it that it could only be removed at the cost of the local authorities, and too often it was deposited on vacant land in the Metropolis, which in process of time became 'eligible building sites.' Thus, the 'dust' of one generation became the grave of another; for of course fevers became common in these dust-infected localities, and a pestilence would soon have arisen if the practice had been continued. By-and-by the Dust Destructor came to the aid of the sanitary reformer, although its adoption was by no means so rapid as might have been expected. People objected to the smoke, and especially to the fumes; and destructors situated on the edge of one parish were charged with polluting the atmosphere of adjoining parishes. Dust destruction is really cremation, and it has been reserved for the East End parish of Shoreditch to prove that destruction and construction may go forward together, the one being the outcome of the other. In this parish, where upwards of twenty-six thousand tons of refuse have to be consumed in a year, the heat produced by the crematory process is used to generate steam in boilers attached to the destructor, and this steam is used to drive the electric light and power machinery. It is also used for clothes-washing purposes, in the public baths and wash-houses, and exhaust-steam is also supplied to the baths and free library, which are entirely heated from the steam raised by the refuse destructor. The average cost of burning the refuse during the second year of working, including wages, was practically two shillings and sevenpence per ton, and the amount of electric energy absorbed in dealing with the refuse, including electric fans, lifts, trucks, and lighting, was 4.98 Board of Trade units per ton per annum. The total amount of energy sold by meter to consumers was 1,031,348 Board of Trade units, including 131,140 units supplied to the destructor itself; and the coal consumed amounted to 1344 tons, of the value of one thousand three hundred and eight pounds. The item of cost per ton for interest and redemption of land and plant is worked out at practically one shilling per ton. The clinker residue, which amounts to 32 per cent., is suitable for making mortar-concrete, and, when ground and mixed with Portland cement, makes excellent paving slabs. Altogether, this is a very interesting and instructive experiment; and it has been reserved for one of the

poorest parishes in London to set an example of thrift to its richer and more powerful neighbours throughout the Metropolis, and in fact throughout the kingdom.

PHONOGRAPHIC RECORDS.

It is now nearly twenty years since Edison startled the world with his wonderful talking-machine, the phonograph; and great were the anticipations aroused as to its future possibilities. We were to have preserved to us for all time the dulcet notes of our public singers, and the speeches of our great men were to remain with us long after they were themselves gone down into silence. Possibly some day the instrument may be so improved that it will give us something more than caricatures of the sounds it has registered on its waxen cylinder, but at present it remains little more than a splendid scientific toy. The Vienna Academy of Science evidently views the matter in a far more optimistic spirit, and is forming a collection of phonographic records for the benefit of posterity. Speech, both cultured and plebeian, is to be preserved in this way, and the voices of singers and the playing of different musical instruments are also to be recorded. We fear that under the present conditions posterity will get but a blurred outline of the sounds which commended themselves to their forefathers.

MEMORIALS OF LONDON.

At a meeting of the Committee for the Survey of the Memorials of Greater London, the valuable work of which is recognised by the London County Council, an account of the progress made in collecting drawings, &c., descriptive of the Metropolitan area as it used to be was given. Three volumes, descriptive of as many outlying parishes, are in progress of publication, and they contain a vast amount of interesting historical references. On behalf of the committee a statement was read as to the terrible destruction which had been wrought in the Metropolitan area within the last few years in order to make room for modern buildings and new streets. A great deal of that destruction was of course necessary; but there have been many instances in which beautifully designed buildings have been removed which might have been spared had their value been appreciated. It is one of the objects of this committee to prevent such wanton destruction in the future.

'THE FATHER OF RAILWAYS.'

As George Stephenson never contradicted those who styled him, during his lifetime, 'the Father of Railways,' it has lately been asserted that he had tacitly permitted an injustice to the memory of William James, a great, if unfortunate, railway projector and pioneer.

William James, who was born at Henley-in-Arden,

Warwickshire, in 1771, became a successful solicitor worth one hundred and fifty thousand pounds; and he at one time earned ten thousand pounds a year by his practice. Having projected and surveyed over a dozen railways, including the Manchester and Liverpool Railway, principally at his own expense, his affairs fell into confusion; and he died at Bodmin, in 1837, leaving a family unprovided for. Lately it was proposed to erect a monument to the memory of Mr James, of whom Robert Stephenson—more generous than his father—wrote to Mr James's eldest son in 1844: 'I believe your late father was the original projector of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway.' The subject is fully dealt with in the *Railway Magazine* for July and October 1899, and for May 1900. It is there stated that when George Stephenson was a lad of eighteen, beginning his education, James was already laying out plans for railroads. In 1821 James paid a visit to Killingworth, and saw Stephenson's steam locomotive engine, the possibilities of which so impressed him that he entered into a kind of partnership with Stephenson in 1815 and 1816; James on his part promised to give his assistance in using Stephenson's locomotives in all districts where he had influence. Although the route surveyed by James was not that adopted for the Manchester and Liverpool Railway, which was taken up and completed by George Stephenson, there seems no reason to doubt he earned and deserved the title of 'Father of Railways' in this country.

A grandson of William James—Mr H. B. James, 69 Victoria Street, S.W.—is well known in the railway and engineering world as a contractor and engineer, and has had a varied and successful career. He was responsible for the construction of the sea-defences at Cleethorpe and the marine works at Hythe, and other important undertakings.

A GREAT ELECTRIC CRANE.

A crane, said to be the most powerful in the world operated by electricity, with a maximum lifting-power of one hundred and fifty tons, has recently been built by the engineers of the Newport News Shipbuilding Company, Va., and is used in the construction of warships at that port. The crane is composed of a steel framework forming a tower carried on pile foundations. The revolving portion of the crane carries all the motors and machinery required for the various movements, as well as weights required to balance the tilting tendency of the jib. The circular movement is effected by two pinion wheels, which engage with a rack fixed to the framework. These pinion wheels are driven by separate electric motors, each capable of developing twenty horsepower. One revolution of the crane describes the circumference of a circle two hundred and seven feet in diameter; but when the jib of the crane is at its highest point a circle of eighty-eight

feet in diameter is covered, thus permitting the crane to lift weights lying within these dimensions. The maximum weight of one hundred and fifty tons can only be handled within a circle whose maximum and minimum diameters are one hundred and forty-seven feet and eighty-eight feet respectively; but weights of seventy tons and under may be handled throughout the entire range of the crane's operation.

MELTING IRON.

At the Edison Laboratory, New York, recently, an interesting experiment, in which a piece of iron was melted in five seconds, was successfully performed by a German, Louis Drefus, the agent of Goldschmidt's Chemische Thermo Industrie of Essen. By the method demonstrated by Herr Drefus great heat is obtained in an incredibly short time by the combustion of a chemical compound, the constituents of which are not disclosed by the inventor. A small quantity of the chemical compound was placed in a crucible and covered with a little powdered aluminium; a piece of metal about half-an-inch thick and six inches long was thrust into the crucible; and when the compound was ignited the mixture blazed up furiously, and in five seconds the metal was melted. It is estimated that the heat developed in the process was three thousand degrees centigrade—a temperature hitherto unattainable. The process is expected to be of great value, and a tube company is endeavouring to secure the right to use it for welding together the ends of tubes.

TWO LITTLE BOOKS.

Two little books are mine to read—

Two wondrous volumes wise;

Two books alone are all I need

To read with loving eyes.

So beauteous are they to behold,

And unadorned by art;

Sweet Nature fringed their lids with gold,

The title-page—a heart.

Two little books are mine to read;

But two books make me wise.

Two books alone are all I need:

My dearest loved one's eyes.

C. INNISS BOWEN.

* * TO CONTRIBUTORS.

1st. All communications should be addressed 'To the Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.'

2nd. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.

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